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Ethnicity, birthplace, and achievement: the changing Hawaii mosaic

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PREFACE

The Office of Economic Opportunity's 1975 Census Update Survey of Hawaii not only provided valuable census-type data for the middle of the intercensal period but also made available unique information about many aspects of the state's population, information that has enabled us to do the analysis contained in this paper. We would like to thank James Dannemiller and the people of Survey Marketing and Services, Inc., who actually conducted the survey, for providing us with a computer tape of the data and for assistance in using that tape. At the Population Institute, many individuals helped in the course of the preparation of the paper, including Ruby Bussen, Victoria Ho, and Judith Tom (computer assistance), Mimi Paz (secretarial work), Clyde Kanehiro (graphics), Maureen St. Michel (word processing), Sandra Ward (editorial assistance), and Lois Bender (final production). We hope that the quality of this paper justifies the time and effort they have expended on it.

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ABSTRACT In Hawaii, there is considerable debate concerning immigration and in-migration, the present and likely future ethnic composition of the state, and whether the various ethnic groups are moving toward social and economic parity. Obtaining clear answers to these questions is hindered by the lack of adequate data from the U.S. Census. With the use of a 1975 U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity Census Update Survey and other local sources, however, we are able to address the above concerns and speculate on their likely implications for the future.

Our findings show that among the local-born, the most notable recent development has been the rise of the Orientals (essentially Japanese and Chinese) to equality with the *haoles* (essentially non-Portuguese and non-Puerto Rican Caucasians) on some social and economic indices and clear superiority on others. In contrast, local-born Filipinos and members of other groups remain disadvantaged on all dimensions used in this study. Mainland-born haoles initially suffer from high unemployment but are characterized by moderate income and high educational and occupational levels. Their income and homeownership levels appear to improve markedly with increasing duration of residence. Among Asian immigrants, recent arrivals are characterized by occupational and income levels far below what would be expected, given their educational levels. Longer residence appears to result in greatly improved income, but not occupational improvement. However, whereas immigrant Orientals are initially disadvantaged compared with immigrant Filipinos on many indices, the long-term Oriental immigrants hold a marked advantage over their Filipino counterparts on all indices. The paper offers cultural and historical explanations for these findings.

Differential birth and net migration rates for the various ethnic groups have resulted and will continue to result in markedly different age distributions and rates of population growth. A projection of the Hawaii population to the year 2000 demonstrates slower than expected growth for the haole population, a large increase in the proportion that is Filipino, and a large drop in the Oriental share of the population. These changing proportions suggest that the present dominance of the Orientals in the state government and local economy will come under increasing pressure.

Prior to World War II, Hawaii could be characterized as a multiracial society in which the *haoles*[1] (defined here as non-Portuguese and

1 The term *haole* literally means "foreigner" in Hawaiian. In everyday usage, it generally refers to Caucasians, except that Puerto Ricans (most of whom came soon after Spain ceded Puerto Rico to the United States in 1898) and Portuguese, who were originally brought over as plantation workers and are characterized by low socioeconomic status, are generally not considered to be haoles.

non-Puerto Rican Caucasians) were dominant both politically and economically. In the tumultuous years following the war, several of the local-born nonhaole groups became politically dominant and acquired a considerably greater share of economic power. The Japanese, Chinese, and Koreans (whom we will refer to collectively as "Orientals"—see below) became characterized by family incomes similar to those of haoles and well in excess of those of the other nonhaole groups,[2] came to dominate in the state government,[3] and now own most of the locally controlled business firms in the state. In contrast, the Hawaiians and part-Hawaiians (collectively termed "Hawaiians" in this study), Filipinos, Portuguese, Puerto Ricans, mixed non-Hawaiians, and other smaller nonhaole groups have not achieved a strong voice in the state government and are characterized by incomes well below those of the haoles and Orientals.

The existing economic and political relationships may be threatened by in-migration from the United States mainland and by immigration from abroad. Surveys of incoming passengers from the mainland indicate that some 270,000 intended residents moved to Hawaii between 1961 and 1975. (For yearly figures, see Hawaii, DPED, 1976, table 12.) Perhaps 95 percent of these were Caucasian. Immigration, which had been at relatively low levels since about 1930, suddenly revived after 1965 because of revisions in the immigration law. Between 1966 and 1975, some 60,000 legal immigrants moved to Hawaii, mostly from Asia. The potential effect of these movements to the state can be measured by the fact that there were only about 730,600 nonmilitary-

2 A state survey taken in 1973 revealed median incomes among nonmilitary families to be as follows: Chinese, $15,200; Korean, $14,400; Japanese, $14,300; Caucasian, $14,100; Hawaiian and part-Hawaiian, $10,400; mixed non-Hawaiian, $9,700; Filipino, $9,600; Puerto Rican, $7,600; and Samoan, $6,900 (Hawaii, DOH, 1974, table 16). A 1964–66 survey of Oahu indicated the median Portuguese family income to be 40 percent below that of "other Caucasians" and 25 percent below the county average (Hawaii, DPED, 1968, table 13). See also our discussion of income.

3 A survey taken in 1975 of all state employees except those in the Department of Education (which operates all public schools) and the University of Hawaii revealed that 51 percent of the employees were Japanese and an additional 8 percent were Chinese or Korean. It was estimated that Japanese comprised 36 percent of the state civilian working force and that Koreans and Chinese together contributed 6 percent (Haas, 1975:1–5). A 1974 survey of employees in the Department of Education indicated that Orientals comprised 66 percent of all teachers and 79 percent of all administrators (Kaser, 1974:A3).

related residents in Hawaii in 1975 (Hawaii, DPED, 1981: table 2). (Although the total population was larger, some 865,000, about 135,000 of this number were military-related individuals; most military-related individuals move out of Hawaii within five years of arrival or birth.)

Movement to Hawaii is an important political issue,[4] and the often openly expressed racially based sentiments to limit movement into Hawaii belie the image of the state as a place where persons of all races are welcomed and treated equally. Notwithstanding the passions aroused by the issue of newcomers in the Aloha State, there is a dearth of solid information concerning their numbers, characteristics, and effects on the economy. Our purpose in this paper is to investigate the local-born and migrant populations of Hawaii, addressing the following questions:

1. What are some of the population characteristics of the different ethnic groups in Hawaii? Are some groups growing more rapidly than others?
2. How do the ethnic groups fare in educational achievement, labor force participation and employment, occupation, income, and home ownership? Among the migrants, is there evidence that longer residence in Hawaii leads to greater economic well-being?
3. What are the implications of the answers to these questions for Hawaii's future?

DATA LIMITATIONS

Unfortunately, published U.S. census data are entirely inadequate for addressing these questions. In the first place, members of the Armed Forces and their dependents, who comprised about 15 percent of the state's population in 1975, are not tabulated separately in regular census reports. Their inclusion distorts many analyses, especially of the Caucasian population. Second, because of inconsistencies in tabulating

4 The 1979–83 state administration proposed several measures to limit the number of people moving to the state. The nature of these measures is beyond the scope of this study; what are relevant are the sometimes blatant "we versus they" arguments used to support such measures and the apparent popularity of the measures among the local-born.

race, results from different censuses are not comparable.[5] Furthermore, census practices in this regard do not correspond to how "race" is generally defined in Hawaii. Last, data on characteristics are rarely cross-classified by birthplace and, with the exception of a few tables on persons living elsewhere five years prior to the census, never by number of years lived in Hawaii.

We have attempted to surmount these obstacles by using the 1975 U.S. Office of Economic Opportunity (OEO) Census Update Survey, which sampled all of the state except for Kauai County, with only 35,000 inhabitants, or 4 percent of the state's population (Survey and Marketing Services, Inc., 1976).[6] The OEO survey collected data on ethnicity in a manner consistent with the general practices in Hawaii, and asked each respondent how many years he or she had lived in Hawaii.

We exclude military personnel and their dependents from our study, as few can be regarded as permanent residents and most live on military bases and are thus somewhat isolated from the general population. For purposes of analysis, "Orientals" are often classified as one group, because of cultural similarities among the "East Asians," whereas the term "Asians" includes both Orientals and Filipinos. Filipinos are usually perceived by both themselves and the Orientals to be non-Oriental, and as an ethnic group are clearly in the "have-not"

5 In 1960, for instance, except for part-Hawaiians, who were all classified as part-Hawaiians, offspring of white and nonwhite parents were classified by the race of the nonwhite parent, whereas in 1970 they were classified by the race of the father. In 1970, the category of part-Hawaiian was dropped and many who had been classified as part-Hawaiian in 1960 were reclassified as non-Hawaiian in 1970. In 1950, Puerto Ricans were enumerated as a separate nonwhite ethnic group, whereas in the 1960 and 1970 censuses they were counted as either white or black. For estimates of the extent to which census reclassifications affected indicated numbers by ethnic group in the 1960 and 1970 censuses, see Wright (1979, appendix B).

Compounding the problem is the fact that state vital statistics rely on definitions of race that correspond most closely to the 1950 census definitions and that have not changed to parallel changing census definitions.

6 The survey volumes present the basic tabulations of the survey data. Data in this paper are from a computer tape of the survey data. They represent *estimates* of the population based on the Census Update Survey sample, which covered about 5 percent of the areas surveyed. Kauai County was excluded because a sample survey had been undertaken there a year earlier by another organization. Unfortunately, the Kauai data are not comparable to those collected in the Census Update Survey. However, the exclusion of Kauai has little effect on the state characteristics as indicated by data from the other counties.

socioeconomic category (Samuels, 1963; Hyams, 1968; Masuoka, 1931). All other non-haole local-born ethnic groups are characterized by a common low socioeconomic status and are therefore classified together as "other" unless otherwise noted. We divide the non-Hawaii-born into three groups, depending on whether they have lived in Hawaii fewer than five years, five to ten years, or more than ten years. Among those born elsewhere, the emphasis is on mainland-born haoles and on foreign-born Asians, as those groups are dominant among migrants to Hawaii.

As the Census Update Survey is a cross-sectional, point-in-time data source, we cannot use it to draw firm conclusions about what has happened over time. However, we do have data about groups who have lived in Hawaii for varying lengths of time since their arrival. This information can be used in two ways. First, for a characteristic, such as education, that does not change significantly for most people after arrival, we can compare the characteristics of the early arrivals and recent arrivals and conclude which group arrived with the background more likely to foster success. Second, for characteristics that are likely to change over time and to reflect achievements in the new environment, such as job status and income, we can interpret some patterns for different time-of-arrival groups as if they represent the experience of one cohort as it moved through time. (Insofar as the earlier immigrants were less educationally prepared to be successful, such interpretation probably underestimates the gains possible over time.) Such interpretations, although not entirely accurate, are probably justified and are the best we can do with the available data.

There is a possibility that changes made in the U.S. immigration laws in 1965 cloud our analysis. The changes affected the numbers of immigrants admitted and preference categories. The effect of the former change has been to increase greatly the number of immigrants from Asia, both to the United States as a whole and to Hawaii. The effect of the latter is harder to determine.

Until 1932, the great majority of immigrants to Hawaii were coming for work in the plantation economy, and the employers tended to select illiterate and poorly schooled individuals so that the immigrants would not expect better employment opportunities or be likely to demand better work conditions. After 1932, with the exception of one group of Filipinos recruited for plantation labor (and for purported labor union busting) in 1946, there was not much immigration

to Hawaii until the 1965 changes in the law. Then, there began to be a sizable proportion of educated professionals moving to Hawaii along with the less well-educated, but this probably happened as much because the door to immigration from Asia was now open as because of specific changes in the law. For example, because educational levels have been rising in countries of origin, it is natural to find the educational level of immigrants rising. Thus we find much higher educational achievements of recent migrants (those who had lived in Hawaii 0–10 years at the time of the survey) compared with the educational levels of earlier immigrants.

FINDINGS

Characteristics of Hawaii's population

Almost half of the civilian (nonmilitary-related) population of Hawaii in 1975 was of Asian origin (Tables 1, 2). Some 18 percent were classified as haoles and the balance were listed as "others."[7]

The two factors that affect the ethnic composition of the state's population and changes in its composition are migration and natural increase. Effects of past levels of migration and natural increase are visible in the composition of the various ethnic groups by place of birth. In Hawaii, the Japanese, Chinese, and "others" are overwhelmingly local-born, whereas approximately half of the Filipinos and Koreans are foreign-born and seven-tenths of the haoles are mainland-born. Among persons 18 years of age and over, an even greater proportion (65 percent) of Filipinos are foreign-born and only 15 percent of the haoles are Hawaii-born (data not shown).

Migration data show large numbers of people arriving from both Asia and the U.S. mainland, with the latter dominating. Hawaii Visitors Bureau data show the arrival of 110,773 intended residents from the mainland during the years 1970–74 (Hawaii, DPED, 1981: table 27). Most did not remain in Hawaii, however; the Census Update Survey shows only about 37,500 haoles in 1975 who had lived in the state

7 These proportions are somewhat different than those found in the census and other surveys, because of the different ways of defining and assigning ethnicity. The exclusion of the military-related individuals results in a lower percentage of haoles than usually recorded. A 1976 State Department of Health survey gave roughly the same proportions as those from the Census Update Survey. Among the Asians, Japanese dominated and Filipinos were the second most numerous group.

TABLE 1 Civilian population of Hawaii (excluding Kauai), by ethnicity, place of birth, and years in Hawaii: 1975

Ethnic group	Total	Foreign-born, by years in Hawaii				U.S. mainland-born, by years in Hawaii				Hawaii-born
		Total	0–4	5–10	11+	Total	0–4	5–10	11+	
Total	695,000	90,500	27,000	24,500	37,900	114,100	44,600	37,100	32,100	481,200
Haole	128,300	9,300	3,300	2,800	3,200	90,600	37,500	28,300	24,700	26,700
Total Asian	329,600	71,600	19,600	18,300	32,500	7,700	2,000	2,700	3,000	247,900
Chinese	39,100	7,400	2,400	2,100	2,700	1,100	300	400	400	30,400
Japanese	201,300	18,400	3,000	2,500	12,400	4,900	1,100	1,600	2,100	177,300
Korean	9,700	4,300	2,400	1,000	1,000	400	100	200	100	4,900
Filipino	79,400	41,300	11,800	12,700	16,400	1,200	400	500	400	35,300
Other	237,100	9,600	4,000	3,300	2,200	15,800	5,100	6,100	4,400	206,600

NOTE: Figures in this and subsequent tables exclude military personnel and dependents, as well as the civilian population of Kauai, which had about 35,000 civilian residents in 1975. Totals may not equal sums because of nonresponse to some questions, because of rounding, and because persons born in U.S. possessions are included only in the totals. "Other" category includes 8,200 Hawaiians, 123,000 part-Hawaiians, 60,900 of mixed non-Hawaiian ancestry, 24,500 Portuguese, 5,800 Samoans, 4,000 Puerto Ricans, 1,900 blacks, 7,300 others, and 1,400 whose ethnicity was not stated.

SOURCE: OEO 1975 Census Update Survey.